

## Message Text

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41

ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SCA-01 L-03 H-02 DHA-02 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2501

UNCLAS QUITO 8635

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, EC (BISSELL, JANE ELLEN)

SUBJECT: W/W JANE ELLEN BISSELL

REF: A. STATE 295379; B. QUITO 8528

1. QUESTIONS FROM REF A ANSWERED BELOW INDICATED IN PARENTHESIS:

(1) RECENT STORY IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS IDENTIFIES OTHER LODGER AS SWEDE NAMED JOHN CHRYSPER. THIS WAS BASIS STATEMENT IN PARA 7 OF REF B THAT POLICE HAD CLUE TO HIS IDENTITY. HOWEVER WHEN CONSUL CHECKED NEWS REPORT WITH POLICE IN AMBATO YESTERDAY HE FOUND PROVINCIAL POLICE CHIEF, CHIEF OF PROVINCIAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE AND OFFICER OF IN CHARGE AND UNABLE TO ACCOUNT FOR STORY ALTHOUGH IT BORE A AMBATO DATELINE. EMBASSY TRYING TO TRACE SOURCE OF STORY THROUGH NEWSPAPER.

2. PROVINCIAL CHIEF, LT. COL RIVERA, DISMISSED QUESTIONS IN REF. A AS QUOTE MERE DETAILS END QUOTE AND DEVOTED MUCH OF INTERVIEW TO BEMOANING FACT THAT HIS SERVICE IS NOT BEING REIMBURSED FOR EXPENSES OF BISSELL INVESTIGATION, CONSUL HAD PASSED HIM COPY OF HIS LETTER TO NATIONAL COMMANDER OF INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE CONTAINING REF A QUESTIONS.

3. (5) LT COL RIVERA REPORTED THAT BISSELL'S NAME DID NOT FIGURE IN ANY PASSENGER LIST OF BUSES TO BANOS ON OCTOBER 2. HE SUGGESTED THAT SHE MAY HAVE HITCHED A RIDE FROM AMBATO OR THAT SHE GOT A RIDE WITH SOMEONE SHE KNEW. EQUALLY LIKELY, IT MAY SIMPLY REPRESENT A FAILURE OF THE PASSENGER CONTROL SYSTEM.

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4. (3)(7)(8)(10)(12)(15) IN INTERVIEW WITH CONSUL IN

PRESENCE OF LOCAL POLICE CHIEF ON DECEMBER 9 PENSION OWNER/ MANAGER MRS. BERMEO MADE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS. THE OTHER LODGER, WHOM SHE STATED WAS SWEDISH, ARRIVED ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, SPENT THAT NIGHT IN THE PENSION AND DEPARTED SATURDAY MORNING FOR TENA, RETURNING LATE SATURDAY EVENING. THE PENSION BEING FILLED AND NO ROOM HAVING BEEN HELD FOR HIM, SHE PUT HIM IN HOUSE SHE AND HUSBAND ARE BUILDING IN CALLE MALDONADO. (CONSUL VISITED ROOMS WHICH UNFURNISHED AND SUITABLE ONLY FOR CAMPERS. THEY CONSIST OF TWO ROOMS IN LINE NECESSITATING PASSING THROUGH FIRST, ASSIGNED TO OTHER LODGER, IN ORDER TO REACH INNER ROOM WHICH ASSIGNED TO BISSELL, WHO HAD CHECKED IN EARLIER.) ABOUT 9 AM THE FOLLOWING MORNING, OCTOBER 3, THE OTHER LODGER CAME TO THE PENSION AND CHECKED OUT. SOMETIME AFTER, PERHAPS AS EARLY AS 9:30, HER HUSBAND FOUND THE KEY IN DOOR LEADING TO ROOMS OCCUPIED BY BISSELL AND OTHER LODGER. HE CHECKED THE ROOMS, FOUND NO ONE THERE, LOCKED THE DOOR, AND RETURNED KEY TO PENSION. WHEN BISSELL DID NOT RETURN TO COLLECT KEY, AND MRS. BERMEO BECAME ALARMED AND INFORMED POLICE ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 4. POLICE REACTED TO REPORT THE FOLLOWING DAY AND REMOVED BISSELL'S EFFECTS TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS. IN THE MEANTIME GERADINE CROUCH ARRIVED LATE SUNDAY NIGHT, OCTOBER 3 LOOKING FOR HER FRIED. SHE KNEW AT WHICH HOTEL BISSELL WAS STAYING BECAUSE THE PERSON WHO HAD SHARED THE ROOMS WITH BISSELL HAD SEEN CROUCH IN QUITO AND GIVEN HER THE INFORMATION. (THIS COINCIDES WITH NEWS REPORT MENTIONED IN PARAGRAPH ONE WHICH STATED THAT JOHN CHRYSPER HAD BEEN SEEN IN QUITO AFTER LEAVING BANOS. THE LANDLADY AND BANOS POLICE CHIEF BOTH DESCLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE NEWS REPORT AND NEITHER COULD REMEMBER OTHER LODGER'S NAME ALTHOUGH MRS. BERMEO GAVE HIS NATIONALITY AS SWEDISH.) WHEN CROUCH INSPECTED BISSELL'S EFFECTS THEY WERE STILL IN CALLE MALDONADO. CROUCH THEN SPENT SEVERAL DAYS IN BANOS ARE SEARCHING FOR BISSELL. SHE LEFT BANOS TO REPORT THE DISAPPEARANCE TO AMERICAN EMBASSY, QUITO, AND THEN RETURNED TO BANOS TO CONTINUE SEARCH.

5. THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN MRS. BERMEO AND CROUCH AS TO WHEN LATTER ARRIVED IN BANOS MAY BE RESULT OF FAULTY MEMORY ON BOTH SIDES. IF EACH HAD ERRED ONLY ONE DAY CROUCH WOULD HAVE BEEN IN BANOS IN TIME TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EVENTS EXACTLY AS BOTH SHE AND MRS. BERMEO DESCRIBED. THEIR STORIES ARE CONGRUET  
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EXCEPT FOR THE TIME OF ARRIVAL. WHEN CROUCH CALLED AT EMBASSY ON OCTOBER 7 TO REPORT DISAPPEARANCE, SHE STATED THAT SHE HAD GONE TO BANOS FROM QUITO ON OCTOBER 5 AND REPORTED TO POLICE ON THE FOLLOWING DAY. THIS WOULD NOT HAVE PERMITTED HER SUFFICIENT TIME FOR HER EXTENSIVE SEARCH EFFORTS ON WHICH SHE AND MRS. BERMEO AGREE. POST PLANS TO QUERY CROUCH ABOUT THIS DISCREPANCY WHEN CONTACT ESTABLISHED.

6. POLICE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO LOCATE ANYONE WHO  
SAW BISSELL ON OCTOBER 3. SHE DID NOT BREAKFAST AT THE  
PENSION AND A CHECK OF RESTAURANTS IN TOWN WAS NEGATIVE.  
BLOOMFIELD

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